

SEPARATE STATE PROGRAMS

Wisconsin operates several programs in addition to the federal TANF programs that are funded exclusively with state funds. These programs serve needy families that are ineligible per TANF restrictions (42 USC 608) and other low-income persons. Expenditures under these Separate State Programs will be distinctly tracked in the state's accounting system and will be counted toward the state's MOE requirement for TANF.

W-2 Services for Qualified Aliens

The State of Wisconsin provides benefits and services to qualified aliens without regard to the restrictions found under 8 USC 1612 and 1613. The following qualified aliens may be eligible for W-2, subject to the same eligibility determination used for citizen applicants:

- An alien lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act;
- An alien granted asylum under section 208 of such Act;
- A refugee admitted to the United States under section 207 of such Act;
- An alien paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of such Act;
- An alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) or 241(b)(3) of such Act;
- An alien granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of such Act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980;
- An alien who has been certified as a victim of trafficking;
- An alien who is granted status as a Cuban and Haitian entrant, as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980;
- An American Indian born in Canada who is at least 50% American Indian by blood, or born outside of the United States who is a member of a federally-recognized Indian tribe;
- A alien who has been battered or whose child has been battered;
- An alien admitted to the United States as an Amerasian immigrant, as described in section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations act of 1988;
- An alien lawfully residing in the United States who is an honorably discharged veteran, in active duty in, or the spouse or unremarried surviving spouse (under specified circumstances) of a veteran or active member of the U.S. armed forces; or
- An alien lawfully residing in the United States who is authorized to work by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

W-2 Interim Assistance Program

Adults who have filed an application for SSI and are waiting for a determination of SSI eligibility, and who meet all other W-2 eligibility requirements, will be enrolled in the W-2 Interim Assistance Program. Under this program, the participant will be placed in either a CSJ or a Transition position while the SSI eligibility decision is pending. A participant found eligible for SSI benefits will no longer be eligible for W-2 Interim Assistance. A participant who is denied SSI benefits will be transferred from the Interim Assistance Program to the W-2 program and placed in appropriate W-2 employment activities.

W-2 requires that a participant apply for other public assistance programs for which s/he may be eligible. This provision was included so that individuals who more appropriately should be served under the SSI program or another disability program could apply, be determined eligible, and move from W-2 to that program. The W-2 eligibility criteria also provide that an individual who is a recipient of SSI is not eligible for participation in a W-2 employment position.

Some W-2 participants would be eligible for SSI based on a disability determination. However, the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued a policy requiring the entire W-2 benefit to be counted in the SSI income test if the SSI application was filed by the family member participating in a W-2 employment position and the W-2 benefit is funded with federal money. This federal policy interpretation would virtually disqualify all W-2 participants from becoming eligible for SSI because of excess income. By providing financial assistance through a state funded program, Wisconsin has eliminated the receipt of W-2 benefits as a barrier to SSI eligibility.

Children First Program

Children First is a program which promotes the emotional and financial responsibility of the non-custodial parent to his or her children. The non-custodial parent, who has no current means of meeting a child support obligation, is behind in child support payments and does not work full-time, may be ordered by the court to participate in the Children First program. Judges are given the discretion to determine which non-custodial parents should be referred to the program based on their lack of financial resources and, therefore, no uniform income eligibility requirements have been set. The Children First program operates concurrently with the W-2 program. Federal approval for the use of waiver savings funds for Children First was received on January 4, 1993.

The Children First program requires a court order mandating non-custodial parent participation in the program. The program provides, at a minimum, job search assistance, work experience, education, training opportunities and case management services designed to enable eligible non-custodial parents to obtain and retain employment. The overall result, that of developing a bond between the non-custodial parent and the child(ren) and a communication line between the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent, is essential.

The Children First program is successfully completed when a participant makes full child support payments for three consecutive months or completes 16 weeks of employment and training activities. If these goals are not achieved, the participant may be referred to court for appropriate disposition. A crucial element to the success of the program is the partnership between the court system, the child support agency and the administering Children First agency.

Department of Health and Family Services

Substance Abuse Services

DHFS solicited proposals to provide new or expanded community-based alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs that meet the special needs of TANF eligible individuals, with problems resulting from alcohol or other drug abuse (AODA) in Milwaukee County. The grants were awarded based on the programs' ability to emphasize parent education, vocational and housing assistance and coordination with other community programs and with treatment under intensive care.

Burials

Funding is available when a W-2 participant (individuals placed in W-2 work training placements, custodial parents of infants, and W-2 group members) dies and the estate of the deceased recipient is insufficient to pay the funeral, burial and cemetery expenses of the deceased recipient. The lesser of \$1,000 or the cemetery expenses that are not paid by the estate of the deceased and other persons and the lesser of \$1,500 or the funeral and burial expenses not paid by the estate of the deceased and other persons may be paid. No payment

is made for funeral and burial expenses if the costs for funeral and burial expenses exceed \$3,500. No payment is made for cemetery expenses if the costs for cemetery expenses exceed \$3,500 [s. 49.30, Stats.]. Costs for these burials will be paid with segregated state funding, which Wisconsin will include in its MOE calculation.

Food Stamp Benefits for Qualified Aliens

Effective August 1, 1998, the State of Wisconsin provided state-funded food stamp benefits to qualified aliens and their dependent children who were made ineligible for food stamps solely due to provisions of PRWORA. The State is using eligibility determination and benefit levels used by the federal Food Stamp Program. FSET Services for those qualified aliens who would be mandatory participants under current federal guidelines are being provided under this program. Effective November 1, 1998, those qualified aliens newly eligible for federal food stamps benefits under the provisions of Public Law 105-185, the Agriculture Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) will be removed from the state-funded program.